

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 4781

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJECT: PROSPECTS FOR ELECTIONS; AN APRA VIEW

REF: LIMA 4724

1. SUMMARY: OFFICIALLY-INSPIRED STORIES TO THE EFFECT THAT APRA WILL CONSIDER JUNE 1 WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS DENIED BY APRA CO-SECRETARY, WHO EXPRESSED WHAT APPEARED TO BE WELL-FOUNDED OPTIMISM THAT GOP WILL LIFT MOST OR ALL OF RESTRICTIONS ON FREE ELECTORAL PROCESS BY EARLY NEXT WEEK. IF THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN, APRA WILL BE FORECED TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER ITS PARTICIPATION IN A QUESTIONABLE ELECTORAL PROCESS. PARTY SOURCE PROVIDED BACKGROUND TO APRA'S SECOND PETITION TO JNE TO MODIFY PREFERENTIAL VOTE AND SPECULATED ON POSSIBLE WITHDRAWAL OF SOME LEFTIST PARTIES AND EFFECT IT WOULD HAVE ON ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. GOP-CONTROLLED "LA PRENSA" JUNE 1 CARRIES STORY TO THE EFFECT THAT APRA WILL DECIDE JUNE 1 WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE JUNE 18 ELECTIONS FOR THE CONSITITUENT ASSEMBLY. STORY QUOTES APRA CO-SECRETARY ANDRES TOWNSEND TO THE EFFECT THAT PARTY'S POLITICAL COMMITTEE WOULD MAKE DECISION, IN THE WAKE OF THE GOP'S SECOND REFUSAL TO CONSIDER A MODIFICATION OF THE PREFERENTIAL VOTE, AS REQUESTED BY APRA.

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2. EMBOFF QUESTIONED ANOTHER OF APRA'S CO-SECRETARIES, WHO GAVE AMPLE ASSURANCES THAT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES PARTY IS NOT RPT NOT CONSIDERING A WITHDRAWAL. SOURCE, WHO MET WITH COLLEAGUES TOWNSEND AND ARMANDO VILLANUEVA EVENING MAY 31, SAID THAT HAYA DE LA TORRE IS STILL SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE LEGITIMACY OF THE ELECTIONS BECAUSE OF SUSPENSION OF

GUARANTEES, BUT THAT THERE IS AT PRESENT NO THOUGHT OF WITHDRAWAL AND THERE IS NO MEETING PLANNED JUNE 1 TO CONSIDER SUCH ACTION.

3. ACCORDING TO SAME SOURCE, APRA IS FAIRLY CONFIDENT THAT THE GOP WILL RESTORE MOST OR ALL CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES BY EARLY NEXT WEEK, TO ALLOW TWO FULL WEEKS OF UNRESTRICTED ELECTIONEERING BEFORE THE JUNE 18 CONTEST. IF, HOWEVER, BY MIDWEEK NEXT THE ELECTORAL CLIMATE HAS NOT IMPROVED PERCEPTIBLY, SOURCE SPECULATES THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME APRA WILL BE FORCED TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER WITHDRAWING FROM WHAT WOULD BE A QUESTIONABLE ELECTORAL PROCESS WHOSE OUTCOME WOULD BE SERIOUSLY FLAWED.

4. APRA SOURCE EXPLAINED BACKGROUND OF HIS PARTY'S SECOND PETITION TO THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (JNE) TO HAVE THE PREFERENTIAL VOTE MODIFIED. APRA LEADERS WERE LED TO BELIEVE BY SOURCES WELL-CONNECTED TO THE GOP THAT BECAUSE OF THE PARTY'S CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER FAVORABLY A NEW REQUEST TO MODIFY THE PREFERENTIAL VOTE, ESPECIALLY IF OTHER PARTIES PETITIONED ALONG THE SAME LINES. APRA EFFORTS TO LINE UP SUPPORT WERE DISAPPOINTING. SEVERAL PARTIES INDICATED SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE FOR A CHANGE IN THE VOTING SYSTEM, BUT REFUSED TO PUBLICLY TO ENDORSE APRA INITIATIVE, INDICATING THAT CANDIDATE LISTS HAD BEEN PREPARED WITH PREFERENTIAL VOTE SYSTEM IN MIND AND WOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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IMPOSSIBLE TO CHANGE. THIS LACK OF SUPPORT, TOGETHER WITH HARSH LANGUAGE OF APRA'S MAY 27 COMMUNIQUE (REFTEL) DOOMED THE INITIATIVE TO FAILURE. ACCORDING TO THE PARTY'S RECONSTRUCTION OF EVENTS, THE GOP COULD NOT RISK GIVING THE IMPRESSION OF CEDING TO APRA, WHOSE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE.

5. APRA SOURCE REPORTED THAT THE PARTY LEARNED FROM GOOD SOURCES MAY 31 THAT THE GOP IS CONSIDERING A NULLIFICATION OF THE CANDIDACIES OF ALL THOSE DECLARED GUILTY OF SUBVERSION IN RECENT DISTURBANCES. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE PSR, THE UDP AND FOCEP ARE THREATENING TO WITHDRAW FROM THE RACE IF DEPORTEES/DETAINEES ARE NOT RETURNED/RELEASED, BUT ARE RELUCTANT TO GO ALONE AND HAVE SOUGHT SUPPORT FROM THE PCP, ARS AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. APRA CONTACT CONSIDERS IT UNLIKELY THAT THE LATTER THREE WILL PULL OUT. IF PSR, UDP AND FOCEP WITHDRAW, MOST OF THE LEFTIST VOTE WOULD PROBABLY SHIFT TO OTHER PARTIES (JUST AS THE AP VOTE PROBABLY WILL) IN WHICH CASE APRA FEELS THAT THE ELECTION RESULTS WILL STILL BE LEGITIMATE, PROVIDED THAT THE NUMBER OF SPOILED, PROTEST VOTES STAYS UNDER 10 PERCENT OF TOTAL VOTE. APRA ANTICIPATES THAT PSR, UDP AND FOCEP WILL STAY IN, SINCE RECENT MEASURES

AGAINST THEIR CANDIDATES HAVE GIVEN THEM PROMINENCE AND A SYMBOLIC POSITION AS OPPONENTS OF THE REGIME AND HAS ENHANCED THEIR ELECTORAL CHANCES. THUS FAR THE FACT THAT THEY ARE IN EXILE, IN JAIL OR IN HIDING IS NOT AN IMPEDIMENT TO ELECTION, AND ONCE ELECTED THEY WIL AUTOMATICALLY HAVE PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY.

6. COMMENT: APRA'S CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM ABOUT A RAPID RETURN TO NORMAL ELECTORAL CONDITIONS IS ENFORCED BY STATEMENTS OF JOINT COMMAND CHIEF RICHTER PRADA IN JUNE 1 PRESS TO THE EFFECT THT EMERGENCY MEASURES WILL BE LIFTED "AT THE OPPORTUNE TIME" IN ORDER TO ASSURE THE SUCCESS OF UPCOMING ELECTIONS. AN INDEPENDENT USICA SOUFCE TELLS US THAT THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINES, WITH PERHAPS SOME EXCEPTIONS, WILL CONFIDENTIAL

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BE ALLOWED TO RESUME PUBLICATION ON JUNE 9. WE SUSPECT THAT THE LIFTING OF EMERGENCY MEASURES WILL TAE PLACE IN A PIECEMEAL FASHION. THE GOP'S REITERATION OF ITS EARLIER DECISION NOT TO MODIFY THE PREFERENTIAL VOTE AT APRA'S REQUEST IS SYMPTOMATIC OF A GROWING DISTANCE BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE GOP, OF INCREASING FRICTION IN PLACE OF WHAT WE (AND OTHERS) HAVE INTERPRETED AS A SUBTLE, UNSPOKEN ACCORD. FURTHER EVIDENCE OF GOP PIQUE IS A LONG EDITORIAL IN "EL COMERCIO" OF JUNE 1 ATTACKING APRA'S MAY 27 COMMUNIQUE AND REFUTING AND DERIDING THE PARTY'S POSITION. APRA'S ASSESSMENT ABOUT THE FARE LEFT STAYING IN THE RACE MAY BE OPTIMISTIC, ESPCIALLY IF, AS IS CURRENTLY RMORED, THEIR DEPORTED CANDIDATES ARE DISQUALIFIED BY THE GOP FROM RUNNING. SHLAUDEMAM

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